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2 Linked to Greenpeace Blast Said to Be Officers

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PARIS, Aug. 10 — The two people charged in New Zealand with blowing up a Greenpeace ship last month were part of a Defense Ministry security team and held the ranks of captain and major in the French armed forces, the state-owned French radio said today.

The radio said the two, earlier identified as Alain Jacques Turenge and Sophie-Claire Turenge, were on a mission to collect information about the Greenpeace vessel, the Rainbow Warrior, but it asserted that they were not involved in the bombing attack on the ship on July 10. It said the attack might have been undertaken by a third country to embarrass France.

The radio report, the latest element in a case that has produced a host of press reports that French officials were involved in the Rainbow Warrior attack, did not disclose its sources of information and has not been publicly confirmed by French officials.

The French Government, acting under orders of President François Mitterrand, announced on Thursday that Bernard Tricot, a senior civil servant with ties to the rightist opposition, would head a formal inquiry to determine if Government agents were involved in the Rainbow Warrior affair.

The reports of involvement were made in two newsweeklies that appeared here on Thursday, one of which said Sophie-Claire Turenge was a captain in the French external intelligence agency. How the two Turenge are related was not known.

Any connection between French officials and the operation against the ecologists' ship would greatly embarrass France, whose nuclear weapons tests in the South Pacific are opposed by most of the countries in that region.

The Rainbow Warrior was due to head a flotilla of ships to protest French nuclear tests at Mururoa Atoll in Polynesia.

One crew member, a Portuguese photographer, was killed when two bombs attached magnetically to the ship's hull exploded. The ship sank.

The broadcast today on the state-owned station France Inter was consistent with reports that the Turenge were French officials, but its general thrust was to deny French responsibility in the attack.

According to the radio, the Turenge had no connection with the intelligence agency, but were military officers sent to New Zealand to collect information on Greenpeace's plans to protest French nuclear tests.

It said they were to observe any anti-nuclear activities aimed at possible in-

terference at the Mururoa test site, to identify the leaders of the Greenpeace expedition, and to relay any information to the officials responsible for insuring the safety of the tests.

The Turenge, who were found to be carrying false Swiss passports, were arrested by the New Zealand police two days after the bombing and were later charged with murder and arson.

The radio report did not explain why the Turenge, if they were French officers, were carrying false Swiss passports, nor did it indicate whether the names on the passports were real.

The couple has been at the center of a New Zealand police investigation that has uncovered strong evidence that the operation against the ship was well-planned and coordinated and involved large sums of money.

A major mystery in the case concerns three French citizens being sought by the New Zealand police. The three were reported to have been aboard a chartered boat, the Ouvea, that was seen in the vicinity of the Rainbow Warrior before the bombing. The boat was last sighted on an Australian island on July 17.

The radio report today said the slain crewman on the Greenpeace ship, Fernando Pereira, was a member of a pacifist group with close ties to the Soviet bloc. It also contended that the Rainbow Warrior was equipped with powerful radio transmitting equipment that could have relayed information about the tests to distant places.